AIDS amongst Army personnel

925. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of Army personnel have been found infected with AIDS and if so, the number of such personnel at present;

(b) whether some affected personnel have been removed from the services and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government had received any protest/representation from the National AIDS Control Organization against the removal of such persons from services and if so, the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) It is not correct that a large number of Armed Forces personnel are found infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS). In fact, the incidence of HIV/AIDS in the Armed Forces is significantly lower than that of the general population.

HIV infected personnel are retained in service and those suffering from the full AIDS are initially provided anti-retroviral therapy, as per the World Health Organisation criteria. They are assessed periodically by blood tests and retained in service provided they show improvement in the overall clinical profile. Otherwise these persons are invalided out of service and they are given anti-retroviral therapy for life, as ex-servicemen. 104 personnel were invalided out of services during 2004.

No protest/representation has been received from the National AIDS Control Organisation against removal of such personnel from service.

Defence cooperation agreement between India and Philippines

926. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and Philippines signed an agreement on defence cooperation between the two countries during the recent visit of the hon'ble President to Manila;